

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 091034Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9051

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENNA 5712

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AU, YU

SUBJECT: SLOVENIAN MINORITY CONTROVERSY: ADOPTION OF NEW
MINORITIES LEGISLATION

REF: (A) VIENNA 5044, (B) VIENNA 3756, (C) BELGRADE 4396

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
ON JULY 7 PROMOTION OF MINORITIES AND LANGUAGE CENSUS BILLS.
LEGISLATION PRECEDED BY ABOUT TWO MONTHS OF TOUGH BARGAINING
AMONG THREE PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT, BOTH AT FEDERAL AND
PROVINCIAL LEVELS. SLOVENE MINORITY REPRESENTATIVES
REFUSED TO TAKE PART IN TALKS AFTER GOA DECIDED TO LINK
BENEFITS BILL WITH CENSUS. CHANCELLOR KREISKY, IN PRESSING
FOR ADOPTION OF LEGISLATION, IS GAMBLING ON EVENTUAL SLOVENE
MINORITY ACQUIESCENCE IN CENSUS AND ON GOY PROTESTS BEING
LIMITED TO ORAL AND WRITTEN EXCHANGES BETWEEN FOREIGN OFFICES.
HOWEVER, SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS CONTINUE THEIR STRONG
OPPOSITION TO TYING CENSUS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 7
OF STATE TREATY AND HAVE CALLED FOR BOYCOTT OF
HEAD COUNT. MOST INDICATORS IN CARINTHIA SUGGEST
THAT GROWING SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND ANXIETY AMONG
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MEMBERS OF SLOVENE MINORITY LIKELY TO GIVE RISE TO

CONFRONTATION OF SOME FORM THIS FALL IF NOT SOONER. SUCH PROSPECT BODES ILL FOR AUSTRIAN POLITICAL SCENE AND CONTAINS DISTURBING IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JULY 7 AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENT ADOPTED TWO RELATED BILLS TO DEAL WITH SLOVENIAN MINORITY ISSUE: ONE TO PROMOTE MINORITIES, OTHER TO CONDUCT LANGUAGE CENSUS, PROBABLY ON NOVEMBER 14. THIS LEGISLATION, PASSED WITH UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF ALL THREE PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT, MARKS ANOTHER WATERSHED IN GOA'S EFFORTS, HERETOFORE UNSUCCESSFUL, TO RESOLVE SLOVENIAN MINORITY ISSUE. EARLIER EFFORT IN 1972 WAS STYMIED WHEN SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO ERECT BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNES IN MIXED COMMUNITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 7 OF 1955 STATE TREATY WAS COUNTERED BY NATIONALIST ELEMENTS WHO, DETERMINED TO REINFORCE ETHNIC PURITY OF REGION, TORE DOWN ALL BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS. SINCE THEN THERE HAD BEEN EBB AND FLOW IN DISCUSSIONS LOOKING TOWARD POSSIBLE RESOLUTION OF ISSUE BUT NO REAL SUSTAINED EFFORT TO ACHIEVE COMPROMISE WITH MINORITY LEADERS.

3. UNTIL LATE APRIL, CHANCELLOR KREISKY HAD BEEN TWISTING AND TURNING POLITICALLY IN AN EFFORT TO DELAY ACTION ON HIS EARLIER PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS UNTIL SOME TIME IN LATTER HALF OF 1977 (REF B). EVOLVING CONFRONTATIONAL MOOD IN CARINTHIA (REF A) APPARENTLY MOVED KREISKY TO TRY TO RESOLVE ISSUE THROUGH COMPROMISE AMONT THREE PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES, RESULT OF WHICH WAS LAW OF JULY 6.

4. CHANCELLOR'S COMPLICATED PLAN FOR HANDLING ISSUE REQUIRED THREE-PARTY AGREEMENT ON BILLS SINCE ONLY THEN WOULD BROAD POLITICAL SUPPORT NEEDED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES BE ASSURED AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, ANY ONE PARTY BE PRCLUDED FROM MAKING POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF WHAT HAS BEEN SENSITIVE POLTIICAL ISSUE IN CARINTHIA. PRICE PAID BY KREISKY TO ACHIEVE THREE-PARTY AGREEMENT CAME HIGH HOWEVER. IT INVOLVED NUMBER OF MAJOR ACCOMMODATIONS TO POLITICAL PARTIES IN CARINTHIA. ONE WAS THAT BENEFITS TO MINORITIES (WHICH INCLUDE CORATIAN, HUNGARIAN, AND CONFIDENTIAL

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CZECH IN ADDITION TO SLOVENE-SPEAKING AUSTRIANS FROM PROMOTION OF MINORITIES BILL BECOME AVAILABLE ONLY AFTER HEAD COUNT AND NOT BEFORE, AS ORIGINALLY ENVISAGED BY KREISKY. ANOTHER WAS SEEMINGLY CLEAR REQUIREMENT THAT COMMUNITIES IN QUESTION WILL HAVE TO HAVE MINIMUM 25 PERCENT MINORITY POPULATION AS CONDITION FOR ERECTION OF BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS, ALTHOUGH CHANCELLOR CONTINUES TO DESCRIBE AIM OF CENSUS AS BEING OR "ORIENTATION PURPOSES

ONLY." FURTHER MAJOR CONCESSION BY KREISKY WAS SEPARATE WRITTEN AGREEMENT AMONG THREE PARTIES GIVING EACH PARTY RIGHT OF VETO BY REQUIRING APPROVAL OF ALL PARTIES FOR IMPLEMENTING DECREES TO BE ADOPTED ONLY LATER, PROBABLY IN FALL OF 1976.

5. CHANCELLOR NOW SEEMS TO BELIEVE, WITHOUT MUCH SUPPORTING EVIDENCE AT HAND, THAT SLOVENE MINORITY WILL ULTIMATELY ADJUST ITSELF TO "INEVITABLE CENSUS" AND ADOPT PASSIVE OPPOSITION ROLE, PARTICULARLY WHEN BENEFITS TO FLOW FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF MINORITIES PROMOTION BILL ARE WEIGHED IN BALANCE. SIMILARLY, GOA, PROBABLY REFLECTING KREISKY'S OWN VIEWPOINT, FEELS THAT YUGOSLAV PROTESTS OVER CONTROVERSY ARE PRO FORMA, THAT YUGOSLAVIAN LEADERS, EXCEPT FOR SLOVENES, ARE NOT OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT AUSTRIAN TREATMENT OF SLOVENE MINORITY, AND THAT GOY HAS ONLY USED SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE IN AUSTRIA TO DEFLECT ATTENTION FROM ITS OWN INTERNAL NATIONALITY CONFLICTS. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, GOA, PARTICULARLY ITS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, TENDS TO DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY OF ANY GOY CHALLENGE TO AUSTRIAN ACTION OTHER THAN ANTICIPATED VERBAL PROTESTS. KREISKY SEEMS THUS TO BE GAMBLING THAT "REASONABLE ELEMENTS" AMONG AUSTRO-SLOVENES WILL QUIETLY DISAVOW SLOVENIAN LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATE IN CENSUS, THAT SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP WILL NOT ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL OBSTRUCTION OF CENSUS OR COMMISSION OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE, AND THAT YUGOSLAVIA'S DISAPPROVAL OF GOA APPROACH TO ISSUE WILL BE LIMITED TO EXCHANGE OF NOTES BETWEEN FOREIGN OFFICES.

6. IN CARINTHIA, THREE POLITICAL PARTIES THAT ENDORSED DRAFT LEGISLATION ARE EACH PUBLICLY HALING MOVE AS CONFIDENTIAL

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TURNING POINT IN MINORITY CONTROVERSY AND PRIVATELY CLAIMING FOR THEMSELVES CREDIT FOR TOUGHENING UP LEGISLATION TO IMPLIED DISADVANTAGE OF AUSTRO-SLOVENE MINORITY AND FOR PROTECTION OF INTERESTS OF AUSTRO-GERMAN NATIONALIST ELEMENTS. LATTER ELEMENTS, ORGANIZED IN 80,000 MEMBER HEIMATDIENST, ARE THEMSELVES DISSATISFIED WITH ADOPTED LEGISLATION FROM POINT OF VIEW THAT IT IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR (READ RESTRICTIVE) ON MINORITY RIGHTS; THAT MINORITY, SINCE ALLEGEDLY PRO-YUGOSLAV, IS THREAT TO TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF CARINTHIA; AND THAT ACCOMMODATION OF MINORITY IN EFFECT REPRESENTS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MAJORITY. HEIMATDIENST, UNDER GUISE OF PATRIOTISM AND DEFENSE OF GERMAN CULTURE, CAN BE EXPECTED TO PUSH FOR STRICT IMPLEMENTAION OF LEGISLATION WITH AIM OF PROVING ITS CLAIM THAT SLOVENE

MINORITY IS NEAR NON-EXISTENT IN CARINTHIA.

7. AS FOR SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP, IT HAD NO PART
IN DISCUSSION LEADING UP TO DRAFTING OF TWO BILLS ONCE
GOA OPTED TO LINK BENEFITS BILL WITH CENSUS BILL AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENNA 5712

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SUBJ: SLOVENIAN MINORITY CONTROVERSY: ADOPTION OF NEW
MINORITIES LEGISLATION

TO TENTATIVELY SCHEDULE HEAD COUNT BY LANGUAGE
SPOKEN FOR LATE FALL. SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS
REMAIN STRONGLY OPPOSED TO CENSUS IN ANY FORM AS
REQUIREMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 7 AND, IN
VIEW OF PARLIAMENT'S ACTION, ARE NOW LIKELY TO FIND
THEMSELVES UNDER INCREASED PRESSURE TO ADOPT MORE
TRUCULENT PUBLIC STANCE. FOR MOMENT, HOWEVER, LEADERS
HAVE ANNOUNCED DETERMINATION OF MINORITY TO BOYCOTT
CENSUS AND RENDER RESULTS UNUSABLE ON ONE HAND AND TO
CONSULT CLOSELY WITH GOY ON NEXT MOVES ON OTHER. THEY
HAVE ALREADY REGISTERED PUBLICLY THEIR BITTERNESS OVER
PARLIAMENT'S ADOPTION OF TWO BILLS WITHOUT CONSULTATION

WITH MINORITY GROUP MOST AFFECTED, AND ARE NOW CALLING UPON
GOA TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM CONCERNING
IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 7 ON BASIS OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
AND COMPROMISE.

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8. SLOVENE MINORITY IS NOT WITHOUT ITS SUPPORTERS
AMONG NON-SLOVENIAN AUSTRIANS, WHO ARE FOUND IN RANKS
OF YOUTH, ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, INTELIGENTSIA AND MORE
MODERATE ELEMENTS IN POLITICAL PARTIES OUTSIDE CARINTHIA.
ACTION COMMITTEES OPPOSING CENSUS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED
IN NUMBER OF PROVINCES AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO LAUNCH ACTION
PROGRAMS IN WAKE OF ADOPTION OF LEGISLATION. YOUNG
PEOPLE PARTICULARLY WILL FIND MINORITY CAUSE APPEALING
TO THEIR SENSE OF JUSTICE AND MORALITY.

9. OUTLOOK: MOST INDICATORS SUGGEST MINORITY
CONTROVERSY IS MOVING TOWARD MAJOR CONFRONTATION
IN EARLY FALL IF NOT SOONER. SLOVENE MINORITY AND
YUGOSLAV SUPPORTERS HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE DEGREE
OF RESTRAINT HERETOFORE, LARGELY BECAUSE GOA IS PAST
RECOGNIZED ITS DEFICIENCY IN NOT FULLY IMPLEMENTING
ARTICLE 7 AND STATED IT WAS ATTEMPTING TO DEVELOP
POLICY TO DO SO. NEWLY ADOPTED LEGISLATION NOW SETS
PARAMETERS FOR IMPLEMENTING ARTICLE 7 AND WITH REGARD
TO BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS MAKES THEIR ERECTION IN EFFECT
CONDITIONAL ON MINORITY CENSUS. THOSE OPPOSED TO CENSUS
AND TO GOA'S APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTING ARTICLE 7
NOW HAVE DEFINITE TIMETABLE AND ENACTED LEGISLATION
AGAINST WHICH TO RALLY. AUSTRO-GERMAN NATIONALIST
ELEMENTS, ALSO UNHAPPY WITH NEW LEGISLATION, CAN
BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR DOMINANT POSITION
IN NEXT MONTHS, THUS ADDING TO SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND
ANXIETY IN CARINTHIA, PARTICULARLY AMONG MEMBERS OF
MINORITY. AND AUSTRIAN SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP, WHICH HAS
NEGLECTED SLOVENIAN MINORITY CONTROVERSY IN RECENT YEARS
AND, THANKS TO ITS MARXIST ECONOMIC PREDELECTIONS, STILL
DOES NO REALLY UNDERSTAND PHENOMENON OF NATIONALISM
AMONG SMALL ETHNIC GROUPS IN EUROPE, FEELS ON BALANCE
THAT EVOLVING SITUATION IS MANAGEABLE. THERE IS
GENERAL FEELING THAT CHANCELLOR KREISKY, WHO HAS
RESOLVED IN PAST SO MANY OTHER NEAR IMPOSSIBLE
SITUATIONS FOR PARTY AND STATE, WILL IN END BE ABLE
TO PERFORM SIMILAR FEAT IN CARINTHIA WITH MINORITY
CONTROVERSY. ONE POLITICAL LEADER INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING
THREE-PARTY AGREEMENT PUT EVOLVING SITUATION IN MORE
REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE WHEN, IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST
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FOR HIS EVALUATION OF PROSPECTS, HE STATED THAT SITUATION
OFFEREC NO CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM. IF ANYTHING, SITUATION
SEEMS TO BE MOVING IN DIRECTION OF GREATER PROSPECT OF
VIOLENCE WITH SOME AMONG SLOVENIAN MINORITY TALKING
ABOUT "SOUTH SYROLEAN APPROACH" (I.E. BOMBINGS AND ATTACKS
ON GOVERNMENT EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES) AS BEST MEANS OF
DEALING WITH ISSUE. SUCH DEVELOPMENT WOULD ONLY FURTHER
EMBITTERPOLITICAL CLIMATE IN CARINTHIA AND WOULD HAVE
SOME OBVIOUSLY DISTURBING IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRO-YUGOSLAV
RELATIONS.BUCHANAN

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